

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES FIRST AND SECOND SAMUEL, Week 4**The History of the Ark and the Tabernacle**

Scripture Reading: Scripture Reading: 1 Sam. 4:1—7:2

- 1 Samuel 4:1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. And Israel went forth against the Philistines in battle; and they encamped near Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped in Aphek.
- 1 Samuel 4:2 And the Philistines arrayed themselves against Israel; and when the battle spread, Israel was struck down before the Philistines. And they slew about four thousand men of the array in the field.
- 1 Samuel 4:3 And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, Why has Jehovah struck us down today before the Philistines? Let us take for ourselves the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah from Shiloh that it may come into our midst, and thus save us from the hand of our enemies.
- 1 Samuel 4:4 So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they took up from there the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah of hosts who is enthroned between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the Ark of the Covenant of God.
- 1 Samuel 4:5 And when the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, and the earth resounded.
- 1 Samuel 4:6 And the Philistines heard the sound of the shout and said, What does the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean? Then they found out that the Ark of Jehovah had come into their camp.
- 1 Samuel 4:7 And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God has come into their camp. And they said, Woe to us! For there has never been such a thing as this before.
- 1 Samuel 4:8 Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods that struck the Egyptians with every kind of plague in the wilderness.
- 1 Samuel 4:9 Be strong and be men, O Philistines, lest you become servants to the Hebrews as they have been servants to you. Be men then and fight.
- 1 Samuel 4:10 And the Philistines fought, and Israel was struck down; and every man fled to his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell.
- 1 Samuel 4:11 And the Ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.
- 1 Samuel 4:12 And a man of Benjamin ran from the array and came to Shiloh on the same day, with his clothes torn and earth upon his head.
- 1 Samuel 4:13 And when he came, there was Eli, sitting on his seat by the roadside watching; for his heart trembled for the Ark of God. And when the man came to tell the news to the city, the whole city cried out.
- 1 Samuel 4:14 And when Eli heard the sound of the cry, he said, What does this sound of commotion mean? And the man hurried and came and told Eli.
- 1 Samuel 4:15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old; and his eyes were set, and he could not see.
- 1 Samuel 4:16 And the man said to Eli, I am he who has come from the array, and I fled from the array today. And he said, How did the matter go, my son?
- 1 Samuel 4:17 And he who brought the news answered and said, Israel fled before the Philistines, and there was a great slaughter among the people; and even your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the Ark of God has been taken.
- 1 Samuel 4:18 And when he mentioned the Ark of God, Eli fell from off his seat backward by the side of the gate. And he broke his neck and died, for he was an old man and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.
- 1 Samuel 4:19 And his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant, about to deliver; and when she heard the report that the Ark of God had been taken and that her father-in-law and her husband had died, she bowed down and gave birth, for her pains came upon her.
- 1 Samuel 4:20 And around the time that she died, the women who stood around her said, Do not fear, for you have borne a son. But she did not answer or pay attention.
- 1 Samuel 4:21 And she named the child Ichabod, meaning, The glory has departed from Israel, because the Ark of God had been taken and because of her father-in-law and her husband.
- 1 Samuel 4:22 And she said, The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God has been taken.
- 1 Samuel 5:1 When the Philistines took the Ark of God, they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod.
- 1 Samuel 5:2 And the Philistines took the Ark of God and brought it into the house of Dagon, and they set it next to Dagon.
- 1 Samuel 5:3 And when the Ashdodites arose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face to the ground, before the Ark of Jehovah. And they took Dagon and put him back in his place.
- 1 Samuel 5:4 And when they arose early in the morning of the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face to the ground, before the Ark of Jehovah. And Dagon's head and the palms of his hands were cut off, lying on the threshold; only Dagon's trunk was left to him.
- 1 Samuel 5:5 Because of this, neither the priests of Dagon nor any who enter the house of Dagon tread upon Dagon's threshold in Ashdod to this day.
- 1 Samuel 5:6 But the hand of Jehovah was heavy upon the Ashdodites, and He devastated them and struck them with tumors,

- even Ashdod and its borders.
- 1 Samuel 5:7 And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The Ark of the God of Israel cannot stay with us, for His hand is hard on us and on Dagon our god.
- 1 Samuel 5:8 Therefore they sent for and gathered all the lords of the Philistines to themselves, and they said, What shall we do with the Ark of the God of Israel? And they said, Let the Ark of the God of Israel be brought around to Gath. And they brought the Ark of the God of Israel there.
- 1 Samuel 5:9 Then after they brought it there, the hand of Jehovah was against the city, causing a very great panic. And He struck the men of the city, from small to great; and they broke out with tumors.
- 1 Samuel 5:10 Then they sent the Ark of God to Ekron. But when the Ark of God came to Ekron, the Ekronites cried out, saying, They have brought the Ark of the God of Israel around to us to kill us and our people.
- 1 Samuel 5:11 And they sent for and gathered all the lords of the Philistines, and they said, Send away the Ark of the God of Israel; and let it return to its place, so that it does not kill us and our people. For the panic of death was throughout the whole city. The hand of God was very heavy there,
- 1 Samuel 5:12 And the men who did not die were stricken with tumors. And the cry of the city went up to heaven.
- 1 Samuel 6:1 Now the Ark of Jehovah was in the country of the Philistines seven months.
- 1 Samuel 6:2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, What shall we do with the Ark of Jehovah? Make known to us how we should send it forth to its place.
- 1 Samuel 6:3 And they said, If you send away the Ark of the God of Israel, do not send it away empty, but be sure to return Him a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be made known to you why His hand has not turned away from you.
- 1 Samuel 6:4 And they said, What is the trespass offering that we should return to Him? And they said, Five golden tumors and five golden mice, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines; for one plague was upon you all and upon your lords.
- 1 Samuel 6:5 Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your mice that devastate the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand on you and your gods and your land.
- 1 Samuel 6:6 Why then should you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had dealt severely with them, did they not let the people go, and they went?
- 1 Samuel 6:7 So now take and prepare a new cart and two milch cows on which the yoke has never come, and tie the cows to the cart, and bring their calves home, away from them.
- 1 Samuel 6:8 And take the Ark of Jehovah and put it on the cart; and in a box by the side of it, place the articles of gold which you are returning to Him as a trespass offering; and send it away that it may go.
- 1 Samuel 6:9 Then watch: If it goes up toward its own border at Beth-shemesh, it is He who has done us this great harm. But if it does not, we will know that it was not His hand that struck us; it happened to us by chance.
- 1 Samuel 6:10 And the men did so and took two milch cows and tied them to the cart and shut up their calves at home.
- 1 Samuel 6:11 And they put the Ark of Jehovah on the cart with the box and the gold mice and the images of their tumors.
- 1 Samuel 6:12 And the cows went straight in the way toward Beth-shemesh; they went on one road, lowing as they went; and they did not turn to the right or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them as far as the border of Beth-shemesh.
- 1 Samuel 6:13 Now the people of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley. And when they lifted up their eyes and saw the Ark, they rejoiced to see it.
- 1 Samuel 6:14 And the cart came into the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite and stood still there. And there was a great stone there. And they split up the wood of the cart and offered up the cows as a burnt offering to Jehovah.
- 1 Samuel 6:15 Then the Levites took down the Ark of Jehovah and the box that was with it, in which were the articles of gold; and they placed them on the great stone. And the men of Beth-shemesh offered up burnt offerings and sacrificed sacrifices that day to Jehovah.
- 1 Samuel 6:16 And when the five lords of the Philistines saw this, they returned to Ekron that day.
- 1 Samuel 6:17 And these are the gold tumors that the Philistines returned to Jehovah as a trespass offering: for Ashdod, one; for Gaza, one; for Ashkelon, one; for Gath, one; for Ekron, one;
- 1 Samuel 6:18 And the gold mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines that belonged to the five lords, both of fortified cities and country villages, as far as the great stone on which they rested the Ark of Jehovah, which is there to this day, in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemeshite.
- 1 Samuel 6:19 And He struck the men of Beth-shemesh because they looked into the Ark of Jehovah; and He struck seventy men among the people. And the people mourned because Jehovah struck the people with a great slaughter.
- 1 Samuel 6:20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who can stand before Jehovah, this holy God? And to whom shall He go up from us?
- 1 Samuel 6:21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have returned the Ark of Jehovah; come down and take it up to you.
- 1 Samuel 7:1 And the men of Kiriath-jearim came and took up the Ark of Jehovah and brought it to the house of Abinadab on the hill, and they consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of Jehovah.
- 1 Samuel 7:2 And it was a long time from the day that the Ark began to abide in Kiriath-jearim, for it was twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after Jehovah.
- 1 Samuel 7:3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, If you are returning with all your heart to Jehovah, remove

- the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from your midst, and direct your heart to Jehovah and serve only Him; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.
- 1 Samuel 7:4 Then the children of Israel removed the Baals and the Ashtaroth, and served only Jehovah.
- 1 Samuel 7:5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to Jehovah for you.
- 1 Samuel 7:6 And they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before Jehovah, and they fasted that day. And they said there, We have sinned against Jehovah. And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.
- 1 Samuel 7:7 Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel gathered themselves at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.
- 1 Samuel 7:8 And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Do not stop crying to Jehovah our God for us, so that He will save us from the hand of the Philistines.
- 1 Samuel 7:9 And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering to Jehovah. And Samuel cried out to Jehovah for Israel, and Jehovah answered him.
- 1 Samuel 7:10 And while Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines approached for battle against Israel. And Jehovah thundered with a great voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into a panic; and they were struck down before Israel.
- 1 Samuel 7:11 And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and they struck them as far as below Beth-car.
- 1 Samuel 7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it between Mizpah and Shen; and he called its name Ebenezer and said, Thus far Jehovah has helped us.
- 1 Samuel 7:13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they no longer came into the territory of Israel. And the hand of Jehovah was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.
- 1 Samuel 7:14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were returned to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel rescued their territory from the hand of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.
- 1 Samuel 7:15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.
- 1 Samuel 7:16 And he went year by year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all those places.
- 1 Samuel 7:17 Then he would return to Ramah, for his house was there. And he judged Israel there and built an altar to Jehovah there.

Day 1

- Exodus 40:20-21** Then he took the Testimony and put it into the Ark, and he set the poles onto the Ark and put the expiation cover upon the Ark above it. And he brought the Ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil for the screen and screened the Ark of the Testimony, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.
- Colossians 2:9** For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.
- 2 Timothy 3:15** But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.

I. Christ has gained us so that we might gain Him in order for God to be built into us and for us to be built into Him to become a corporate God-man, the reality of the church as the tabernacle of God, which is the [house of the living God](#), the mutual abode of God and man—Phil. 3:8, 12-14; John 1:14; Rev. 21:2-3; 7:15; 1 Tim. 3:15; John 14:2, 23.

II. In order to enter into the reality of the Body of Christ, we must see the [intrinsic significance of the Ark](#):

- A. The Ark typifies [Christ as the presence of the Triune God](#) with His people for the carrying out of His economy to establish His kingdom on earth—Matt. 1:23.
- B. The Ark was the [center and content of the tabernacle](#), signifying [Christ as the center and content of the church](#); the Ark being the first item mentioned in the vision of the tabernacle indicates that Christ occupies the place of preeminence in the church—Exo. 25:22; Col. 1:17b, 18b:
 1. The Ark contained the tablets of the law as the [testimony of God](#), the expression and revelation of who God is—Exo. 25:16; 31:18.
 2. The Ark in the Holy of Holies signifies [Christ as the center of God's dwelling place, the church](#) (Eph. 2:21-22), and the contents of the church as the house of God (1 Tim. 3:15-16; cf. 1 Sam. 4:22; Rev. 3:20).

Day 2

Exodus 25:10-11 And they shall make an ark of acacia wood: two and a half cubits shall be its length; and one and a half cubits, its width; and one and a half cubits, its height. And you shall overlay it with pure gold; inside and outside you shall overlay it; and you shall make a rim of gold upon it all around.

Romans 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,

- C. The Ark of acacia wood overlaid with gold signifies the **pneumatic Christ as the embodiment of God and as the mingling of divinity with humanity**, the building of God with man, dwelling in our spirit for us to contact God and enjoy God—2 Tim. 4:22; 2 Cor. 3:17; Col. 2:9; Heb. 9:4:
1. Acacia wood signifies **Christ's humanity**, strong in character and high in standard, as the basic substance for expressing God—Exo. 25:10; Matt. 3:16; 4:4; 8:20; 9:12-13; 11:29; 12:19-20; 17:27; 20:28; 27:12, 14; Mark 1:35; 6:39-41; John 6:12; 7:6; cf. Acts 16:7.
 2. The acacia wood being overlaid with gold both inside and outside signifies the **divine nature penetrating the human nature and resting on the human nature** so that it may be expressed through the human nature—Exo. 25:11; Rev. 3:18a; 2 Pet. 1:4; cf. Rev. 17:4.
- D. The propitiatory cover of the Ark signifies Christ as the **meeting place of God and His redeemed people**—Exo. 25:17-22:
1. Christ is the One who **propitiates** (Heb. 2:17), the One who **appeases** the relationship between God and us, the One who **reconciles** us to God by satisfying God's demand through Himself as the propitiatory sacrifice (1 John 2:2; 4:10).
 2. Christ is also the **propitiatory cover** with the shining of His divinity and the redeeming of His humanity, the place where we enjoy propitiation before God and where we can meet and fellowship with our righteous, holy, and glorious God to receive Him as grace—Rom. 3:25; Heb. 4:16:
 - a. The two cherubim of gold on the propitiatory cover indicate that **God's glory shines out from Christ** (Exo. 25:18-20); the blood of the propitiatory sacrifice being sprinkled on the propitiatory cover of the Ark signifies that because of the blood of Christ's redemption, **we can have fellowship with the righteous God in the midst of His glory** (Lev. 16:14-15).
 - b. The more God meets with us and speaks with us, and the more we meet with God and listen to His speaking, the more of the testimony of God there will be in our experience.

The blood sprinkled on the propitiatory cover came from the sacrifices. Although the sacrifices were slain at the altar in the outer court, the blood was brought into the **Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the ark**. This indicates that the **effectiveness of the blood of the sacrifices is not mainly at the altar in the outer court, but at the ark in the Holy of Holies**. However, the understanding of most Christians today regarding the blood is limited to the blood shed on the cross. Many hymns speak of the blood of the cross. In their Christian life, believers may spend all their time at the cross, at the altar. Some may spend their entire Christian life making one circle after another around the cross. Few enter into the Holy of Holies.

Consider your experience in the past. When you were in the denominations, did you ever enter into the Holy of Holies? Did you not spend a great deal of time only at the cross? Did you not sing hymns which only emphasized the blood at the altar? The blood shed on Calvary has been brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the propitiatory cover. According to the Old Testament, the blood shed at the altar was first sprinkled at the altar. This signifies the **accomplishment of redemption**. Then after redemption, or propitiation, had been accomplished, this blood was brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled on the cover of the ark. This made it possible for God to meet with man and speak with him from between the cherubim. **When God comes to meet with us, His standing is the redeeming blood**. Because the blood has been sprinkled on the propitiatory cover and because God's standing is on the blood, **He can meet with us in the midst of His shining glory**. All this is related to the Christ who lives in us.

We now have such a wonderful Christ dwelling in our spirit. But because of our **blindness** and **ignorance**, not many of us have an adequate realization concerning Him. Most Christians have never realized in a full way that the Christ who lives in us is the very One portrayed by the ark with the propitiatory cover. However, we should not be satisfied simply to hear of such a Christ and learn of Him in a doctrinal way. **We must go on to experience Him more and more.** (*Life-Study of Exodus, chapter 87*)

Day 3

Numbers 10:35-36 And when the Ark set out, Moses said, Rise up, O Jehovah, and let Your enemies be scattered; and let those who hate You flee before You. And when it came to rest, he said, Return, O Jehovah, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel.

III. The history of the Ark and the tabernacle portrays the **desire of God's heart, the **desolation of the church**, and the **recovery of the church** for God's testimony, God's expression—Exo. 25:9-10; 26:26-30; 40:38:**

- A. As the center and content of the tabernacle, the Ark signifies **Christ as the center and content of the church as God's tabernacle, God's house, for God's corporate expression**—25:22; 40:21; Col. 2:9; Eph. 2:21-22; 1 Tim. 3:15.
- B. In the first stage of its history, the Ark was in the **tabernacle**; this signifies that the normal **church was the expression of Christ**, and **Christ was the content of the church**; however, the Ark eventually was **separated** from the tabernacle; this signifies that the church became **degraded and lost the reality and presence of Christ**—Exo. 40:34-35; 1 Sam. 4:1—7:2.
- C. The Ark typifies Christ as the embodiment of God and as the presence of the Triune God with His people for the carrying out of His economy to establish His kingdom on earth (Josh. 3:3, 10-17); to bring out the Ark was to **bring out the presence of God** (Num. 10:33-36; 1 Sam. 4:3-4).
- D. The move of the Ark was a picture of God's move on the earth in Christ as His embodiment (Psa. 68:1-18); however, during Israel's fighting with the Philistines, **God did not intend to move**.
- E. The children of Israel had no thought of or concern for God's economy, and their bringing out the Ark to battle the Philistines indicated that they were **usurping God**, even forcing Him to go out with them for **their** safety, peace, rest, and profit.
- F. In principle, we do the same thing whenever we pray for our prosperity **without** any consideration of God's economy; instead of usurping God, we should pray, live, and be persons, like Samuel, according to God's heart and for His economy.

Day 4

1 Samuel 4:11 And the Ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

Revelation 3:19-20 As many as I love I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, then I will come in to him and dine with him and he with Me.

- G. Today men are **replacing** God's testimony with **man's need**; when man's need replaces God's testimony, degradation begins and problems arise; the Ark was not only the Ark of God (1 Sam. 4:11, 13, 17-19, 21-22) but also the Ark of the Testimony (Exo. 25:22; 40:21).
- H. Israel should have **repented**, made a thorough **confession**, **returned** to God from their idols, and **inquired** of God as to what He wanted them to do.
- I. Instead, having no heart for God's desire or for His eternal economy, they **exercised their superstition** to trust in the Ark based on their past victories that they had experienced through the move of the Ark.
- J. Due to Israel's degradation, the Ark was captured by the Philistines and was separated from the tabernacle, leaving the tabernacle an empty vessel with no reality, no proper content (1 Sam. 4:11—6:1); this signifies that in the second stage of its history, the church became **degraded and lost the reality and presence of Christ** (chs. 3—4; Rev. 3:20).
- K. In their degradation Israel was foolish because they **did not trust in God directly**; rather, they trusted in the systems ordained by God; before bringing the Ark of God out of the tabernacle, they should have checked with God as Joshua did at Jericho (Josh. 6:2-4; cf. 9:14).
- L. **From the depths of our spirit** we should say to the Lord, "Lord, I am not here on earth for my health, my prosperity, my safety, my peace, my rest, or my profit; because I want to be a true overcoming Nazarite cooperating with You for the fulfillment of Your economy, I ask You what is on Your heart concerning me"—1 Sam. 2:30b, 35; Num. 6:1-9; cf. 1 Kings 8:48; Jer. 32:39.
- M. In their degradation the children of Israel **offended God to the uttermost**, and God left them; eventually, instead of the Ark saving Israel, the Ark itself was captured, and the glory of God departed from Israel (1 Sam. 2:30, 34; 4:10-18, 22; Psa. 78:61); to be "Arkless" is to be "Christless," and to be "Christless" means that there is "Ichabod," meaning No Glory (1 Sam. 4:21-22; Rev. 3:20).

Day 5

2 Samuel 6:12	And it was told King David, saying, Jehovah has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that he has because of the Ark of God. So David went and brought up the Ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with rejoicing.
1 Kings 8:6	And the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah to its place, into the innermost sanctuary of the house, into the Holy of Holies under the wings of the cherubim.

IV. Later, the Ark was recovered and brought first to the house of Abinadab at Kiriath-jearim, where it remained for twenty years (1 Sam. 6:2—7:2), and then to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, where it stayed for three months (2 Sam. 6:1-11; cf. 1 Sam. 1:24; Josh. 18:1); this signifies that beginning from the second century a number of “Obed-edom” **were raised up, who had the Lord’s presence** (the Ark) **but did not have the proper church life as the expression of Christ** (the tabernacle).

V. David moved the Ark from Obed-edom’s house to a tent that he had prepared for it in his own city, at Mount Zion, the choicest place in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:12-19; 1 Chron. 15:1—16:1); this was an improved situation, but the Ark was **still in an improper place because it had not been returned to the tabernacle**:

- A. This situation signifies that other believers who, like David, cared for God’s interests, attempted to practice the church life **according to their own choice**, not according to God’s revelation.
- B. These believers had Christ, but they had Him with an **improper practice of the church life** (typified by David’s tent in Jerusalem)—cf. 1 Kings 3:3-15.

VI. Finally, after Solomon finished the building of the temple in Jerusalem, the Ark was moved into the Holy of Holies in the temple for a full recovery of the normal situation; today in His recovery the Lord is **working to restore the normal condition of Christ within the proper church** as the reality of the Body of Christ for His expression—8:1-11, 48; Eph. 2:21-22; 3:16-21.

Day 6

Exodus 40:21	And he brought the Ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil for the screen and screened the Ark of the Testimony, as Jehovah had commanded Moses.
Exodus 40:34	Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle.
Ephesians 3:16-17	That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit into the inner man, That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

VII. The history of the Ark and the tabernacle is a prefigure of church history, giving us a full portrait of the course and situation of the church from the very beginning to the present time; there are **five main aspects** of this history:

- A. The first situation is that of the **church with Christ in it**; this is typified by the **Ark in the tabernacle, with the Ark as the content and the tabernacle as its expression**; this is a picture of the first stage of the church in an absolutely normal condition of Christ being the content of the church and the church being the expression of Christ—Exo. 40:34-38; Eph. 3:16-21.
- B. The second situation is that of the **church without Christ in it**; this is typified by the Ark being captured and separated from the tabernacle because of the **failure of the people of God**; the tabernacle becoming empty portrays the **failures of the Christians** that caused the church to lose the reality and presence of Christ—Rev. 2:4-5; 3:20.
- C. The third situation is that of **Christ without the church**; this is typified by the **Ark being without the tabernacle**; first, in the house of Abinadab at Kiriath-jearim for twenty years (1 Sam. 7:1-2) and then in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for three months (2 Sam. 6:10-12), the Ark was apart from the tabernacle; church history reveals that from the second century to the present time there have been many Obed-edom.
- D. The fourth situation is that of **Christ with an inadequate church**; David had prepared a tent for the Ark in Jerusalem, but it was not according to the pattern revealed by God to Moses; many Christians have the Ark—Christ—**with an inadequate church**—v. 17; 1 Chron. 15:1; 2 Chron. 1:4; Exo. 25:9.
- E. The fifth situation is that of **Christ with a proper church**; this is typified by the Ark with the proper tabernacle that has been enlarged and increased to be the temple; it is in this situation—**Christ as the reality with a proper church as His expression— that we feel completely at home**—Psa. 90:1-2; 91:1-16; 92:12-15; 132:5, 8; 1 Chron. 28:11-20; 2 Chron. 3:1.

A NECESSARY LESSON

David followed God with a **sincere heart**, but when he sent for the Ark, he **lacked enlightenment**. He had a heart for God but not the light from God, so he acted wrongly. The Philistines had previously used a cart to return the Ark to Israel. David thought that this was quite suitable, so he used a new cart to bring the Ark to Zion. God tolerated the ignorant Gentiles, but David had to learn the lesson. He had to learn not to do things according to the way of worldly people **but according to the way of God's holiness**. While transporting the Ark, one of David's men met with an accident. The oxen pulling the cart stumbled, and the Ark began to fall, whereupon Uzzah, one of the men, stretched out his hand to steady the Ark. The fleshly hand tried its best to help, but God never needs such help. If God wants something to fall, we must never attempt to hold it. We had better let it fall; then we will be blessed. Uzzah tried to keep the Ark from falling; however, not only did the Ark fall but Uzzah himself fell dead. By this death the move of the Ark was frustrated, and David was greatly disturbed. He became fearful of the Ark and abandoned his attempt to transport it by a cart.

The practice of Christmas affords an example of how Christians attempt to do good for God in a worldly way. Many argue in favor of this holiday. They claim that sending Christmas cards will help others to know Christ. They "preach the gospel" by Christmas cards. But that is doing things in the Philistine way. The card is like the cart. We need a living testimony to preach the gospel of Christ. We need the living priests to bring Christ to people. Then the issue will be life and not death. We may use many things to illustrate the same principle.

David was indeed wrong in **moving the Ark according to the worldly way**, and he was also mistaken in his **human opinion**. We must not touch Christ according to the worldly way; we must never touch the testimony of God according to the Philistines' way. To do so is spiritual death. We must learn to **abandon the worldly system and keep our hands off**. David should have been enlightened by reading the record of God's Word. He should have seen the revelation of God and learned the divine way rather than use the way of the world. **We must always touch Christ, the testimony of God, by the divine way that is revealed in the Word**. We should never move on the basis of good in relation to the Ark, attempting to do something good for God, even with a good motive or a sincere heart. We must be extremely careful, lest we bring in spiritual death. May we be faithful to God and learn to fear God, not going along with the worldly way, not exercising our human efforts, but rather **learning God's Word, God's commandment**, to do the right thing in the right way. It is not sufficient simply to know the right thing; we must also have the **right way**. Praise the Lord for the good intentions and motives, but is your way by "the cart," or by the priests carrying the Ark? Are you proceeding according to the worldly system, or according to God's revelation?(*The Vision of God's Building, chapter 10*)